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INSECTIVOROUS BIRDS

OF

NEW SOUTH WALES;

BY

ALFRED J. NORTH, C.M.Z.S.,
ORNITHOLOGIST OF THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM.

4 plates

PART II.

SYDNEY: WILLIAM APPLEGATE GULLICK, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.
1897.

11b 62—97

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FROM AGRICULTURAL GAZETTE OF N. S. WALES.

January, 1897.

A List of the Insectivorous Birds of New South Wales.

BY ALFRED J. NORTH, C.M.Z.S.,
Ornithologist to the Australian Museum.

PART II.

(Continued from Vol. VII, p. 397, 1896.)

64. MALURUS CYANEUS, *Ellis*. Superb Warbler, "Blue Wren," "Cock-tail."

Malurus cyaneus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 18 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs, Austr. Bds., p. 112 (1889).

A RESIDENT and well-known species inhabiting most parts of Eastern New South Wales. It has decided preference for those localities near the coast which are covered with a scrubby undergrowth; and it is also a common species about orchards and gardens. Few of our birds are better known about the public parks and gardens of Sydney than the pert and lively Superb Warbler; the rich velvety blue and black attire of the male frequently arresting one's attention as it trips across the grassy lawns, or pours forth its cheerful song from the top of some low bush. The nest of this species is dome-shaped, with a narrow entrance in the side; it is constructed of dried grasses, and lined inside with feathers, hair, or the soft down from the seed-pods of the "Cotton Plant." Usually it is built in a low bush, but occasionally in long grass. The eggs are three or four in number for a sitting, of a pale fleshy-white ground colour, spotted and blotched with different shades of reddish-brown; length, 0·67 x 0·5 inch. The breeding season of the Superb Warbler commences in August and continues until the end of February. Frequently the Rufous-tailed Bronze Cuckoo (*Lamprococcyx basalis*) deposits its egg in the nest of this species. The figure represents an adult male; the female and young males are brown.

65. MALURUS LAMBERTI, *Vigors and Horsfield*. Lambert's Superb Warbler, "Chestnut-backed Superb Warbler."

Malurus lamberti, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 24 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 113 (1889).

The range of the Chestnut-backed Warbler extends over most parts of the Colony; it is, however, far less frequently met with than the preceding species. Its nest is like that of *M. cyaneus*, but it is usually placed in a tuft of long grass, or in a low shrub in which the grass is growing through it. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, of a pale fleshy-white, spotted or blotched with dark red; length, 0·66 x 0·48 inch.

NOTE.—Contributions from the Australian Museum, by permission of the Trustees.

66. Malurus melanotus, *Gould.* Black-backed Superb Warbler.

Malurus melanotus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. iii, pl. 20 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs, Austr. Bds., p. 114, pl. xiii, fig. 19 (1889).

This species is only met with in the scrubby arid back country of the south-western portions of the Colony. In habits and mode of nidification it resembles *M. cyaneus* of the coast. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, white, spotted with rich red; length, 0·65 x 0·45 inch.

67. Malurus leucopterus, *Quoy et Gaimard.* White-winged Superb Warbler, "White-winged Wren."

Malurus leucopterus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. iii, pl. 25 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 116 (1889).

An inland species rather freely dispersed over the "Saltbush" (*Rhagodia*) covered plains of the central and south-western portions of the Colony. It is of a shy disposition and so feeble are its powers of flight that in dry seasons when the country is bare, it can easily be run down on horseback. The White-winged Superb Warbler constructs its dome-shaped nest in a low bush close to the ground. Eggs, four in number for a sitting, some being almost pure white or but finely freckled with pale reddish-brown, other specimens being blotched or zoned with light red on the larger end; length, 0·58 x 0·43 inch.

68. Malurus leuconotus, *Gould.* White-backed Superb Warbler.

Malurus leuconotus, Gould, Suppl. Birds of Austr., pl. 24 (1869); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 117 (1889).

The White-backed Superb Warbler is an extremely rare species, differing only from the preceding bird in having the back as well as the inner coverts and inner secondaries pure white. Only on one occasion has its occurrence been recorded in New South Wales, when it was found breeding near Bourke.

69. Malurus callainus, *Gould.* Turquoisine Superb Warbler.

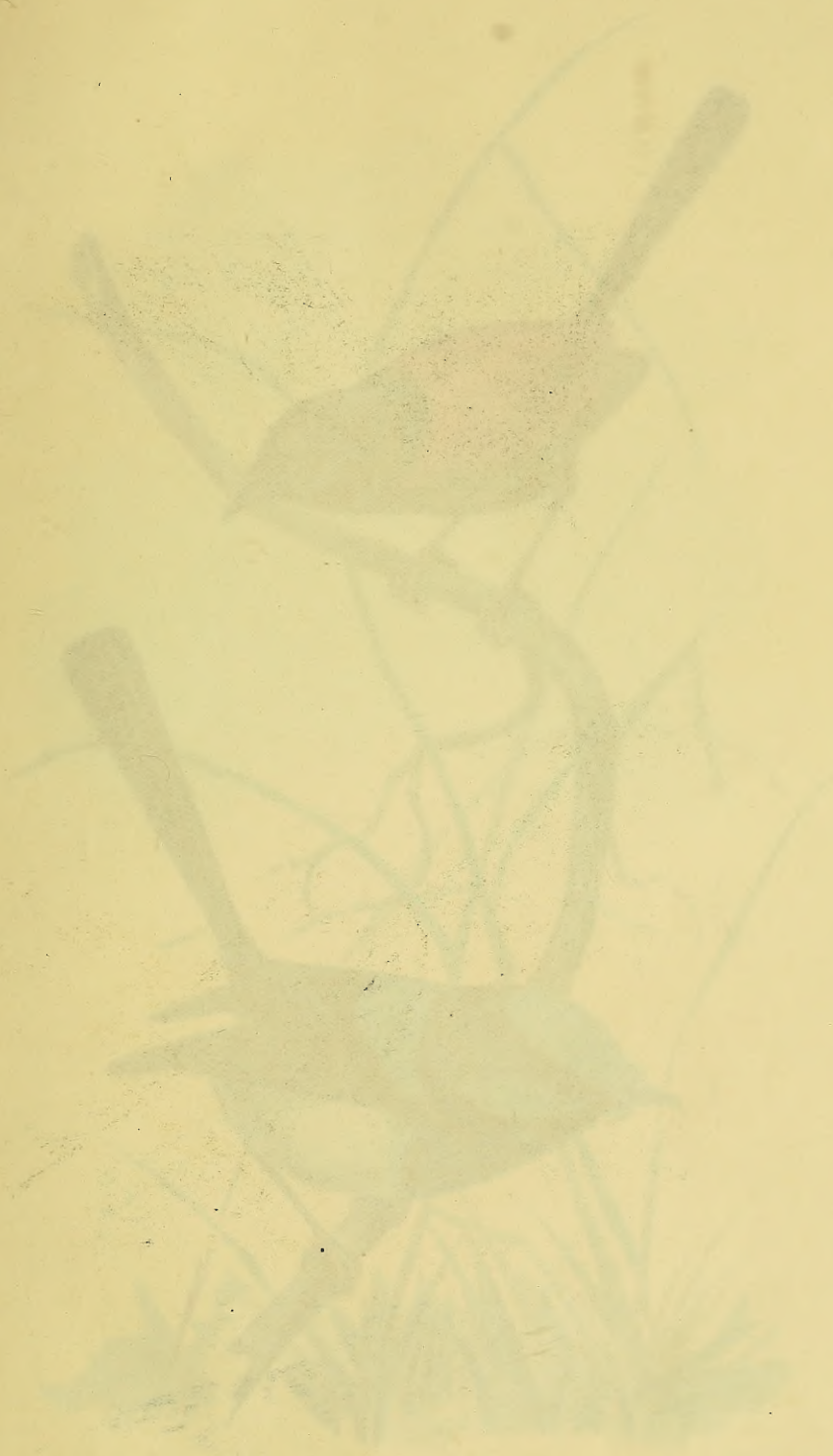
Malurus callainus, Gould, Suppl. Birds of Australia, pl. 23 (1869); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 118, pl. xiii, fig. 18 (1889).

One of the most beautiful species of this interesting group of birds inhabiting New South Wales, and met with only in the dense scrubs in the central and western portions of the Colony. It builds a dome-shaped nest in a low bush or shrub, and lays three or four eggs, white, with dots, spots, and blotches of rich red; length, 0·67 x 0·48 inch. Like all the species of this genus, upon the Turquoisine Superb Warbler frequently devolves the duty of hatching the egg, and rearing the young of the Rufous-tailed Bronze Cuckoo (*Lamprococcyx basalis*).

70. Malurus melanocephalus, *Vigors and Horsfield.* Black-headed Warbler, "Scarlet-backed Superb Warbler."

Malurus melanocephalus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed. Vol. iii, pl. 26 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 117 (1889).

The Scarlet-backed Superb Warbler is freely dispersed throughout the rich brushes of the northern coastal rivers, and the grassy gullies and valleys of their watershed. The nest is similar to that of *M. cyaneus*, and is usually built in a tuft of long grass. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, white, spotted, and minutely freckled, or dotted with rich red; length, 0·62 x 0·43



Malurus melanocephalus, n. sp. (Male)
Black-headed Superb Wren-tit

Malurus cyaneus, Ellis
Superb Wren-tit

MALURUS MELANOCEPHALUS, VIG. & HORSF.
BLACK-HEADED SUPERB WARBLER.

MALURUS CYANEUS, ELLIS.
SUPERB WARBLER.

inch. All the members of this genus are strictly insectivorous, but with the exception of *M. cyaneus*, *M. lamberti*, and the present species, they are only met with on the large pastoral areas in the interior of the Colony. The figure represents an adult male.

71. MENURA SUPERBA, *Davies.* Lyre-bird, "Native Pheasant."

Menura superba, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 14 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 119, pl. X, fig. 4 (1889).

Inhabits the brushes of the coast, but is far more freely dispersed throughout the dense undergrowth that clothes the sides of our mountain ranges, particularly those in the south-eastern portion of the Colony. This bird is of a shy and retiring disposition, and although known by its rich and varied notes to most residents living in the localities which it frequents, it is more often heard than seen. It breeds in June, July, and August, constructing a large oval-shaped nest of sticks, twigs, ferns, and mosses, having an entrance in the side, and lined with rootlets and the downy feathers from the flanks of the parent bird. The nest is usually placed on or near the ground at the foot of some stump, or between the stems of two small trees growing near one another. Sometimes it is built upon a ledge of rock, and not unfrequently in the thick bushy top of a tree-fern. Only one egg is laid for a sitting, varying in ground colour from slaty-grey to blackish or purplish-brown, and having spots and blotches of a deeper hue distributed over the surface of the shell; length, 2·45 x 1·65 inch. With the exception of small molluscs and terrestrial crustacea obtained chiefly under fallen leaves, the food of the Lyre-bird consists of insects. It is, however, too cautious to venture upon cleared lands or into orchards in search of them.

72. MENURA ALBERTI, *Gould.* Prince Albert's Lyre-bird.

Menura alberti, Gould, Birds of Austr., suppl., pl. 19 (1869); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 122, pl. X., fig. 4 (1889).

A rarer species, and the tail feathers not so long as in *M. superba*, but which it resembles in habits and in its mode of nidification. It frequents the mountain ranges and dense brushes of the northern coastal districts lying between the Clarence and Tweed Rivers. The egg is slightly smaller than that of the preceding species.

73. AMYTIS STRIATUS, *Gould.* Striated Wren.

Amytis striatus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 29 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 123, pl. IX, fig. X (1889).

This species is an inhabitant of the mallee scrubs and those large areas covered with a dense growth of Porcupine grass (*Triodia irritans*) in the central and western portions of the Colony. The nest of the Striated Wren, which is built upon the ground, under the shelter of a bush or in a tuft of grass, is a partially-domed structure composed of bark fibre and the dried blades or spines of the Porcupine grass. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, white, thickly freckled and spotted with rich red; length, 0·85 x 0·65 inch.

74. AMYTIS TEXTILIS, *Quoy et Gaimard.* Rufous-flanked Wren.

Amytis textilis, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 28 (1848).

A common West and Central Australian species, but extremely rare in New South Wales. Gould, who visited Australia in 1838-9, states he found it very abundant on the Lower Namoi; but I did not meet with it during a collecting-trip made there in November, 1896.

75. Stipiturus malacurus, *Latham.* Emu Wren.

Stipiturus malachurus, Gould, Birds Austr, fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 31 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 124 (1889).

A resident species evincing a decided preference for marshy districts covered with rushes near the coast; and less sparingly distributed throughout the low contiguous scrubby undergrowth. The nest which is nearly spherical in form with an entrance in the side, is usually built under the shelter of a tuft of rank grass or overhanging rushes; it is constructed of grasses and rootlets, and is lined with feathers, mosses, or other soft and warm materials. Eggs, three in number, for a sitting, white, sprinkled over with minute dots and spots of light reddish-brown; length, 0·64 x 0·5 inch. This bird is strictly insectivorous, but it is seldom seen on cultivated lands.

76. Hylacola pyrrhopygia. Red-rumped Wren, "Scrub Wren."

Hylacola pyrrhopygia, Gould, Bds. of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 39 (1848); North, Nest and Eggs of Austr. Birds, p. 127 (1889).

This species is sparingly distributed in favourable situations over most parts of the Colony. It frequents low scrubby undergrowth, and more particularly those portions in which the *Epacris* and stunted *Banksia* abound. Near Hornsby and Thornleigh on the northern line it may be met with in the bush, but it seldom ventures into the neighbouring orchards. The nest of the Red-rumped Wren is a dome-shaped structure with a narrow protruding entrance in the side, and is composed of strips of bark, grasses, and wiry rootlets, slightly lined inside with feathers or other soft material; it is usually built in a thick bush within a few inches of the ground. Eggs, two or three in number for a sitting, varying in ground colour from a warm pinky-white which becomes darker at the larger end, to a light clove brown; the surface of the shell being sparingly marked with different shades of chocolate-brown, but predominating as usual towards the thicker end. Some specimens are entirely free from markings, but usually the ground colour is much darker on the thicker end; length, 0·77 x 0·58 inch.

77. Atrichia rufescens, *Ramsay.* Rufous Scrub-bird.

Atrichia rufescens, Gould, Suppl. Birds, Austr., fol. ed., pl. 26 (1869).

A rare species inhabiting the dense brushes of the Richmond River. This bird is a perfect mimic and ventriloquist, and may be heard imitating the notes of many species frequenting the same situations, but seldom exposes itself to view. Its food consists of insects, which are procured chiefly among fallen and decaying timber. Nothing is known of its nidification, and its nest and eggs would be a welcome addition to the Museum collection.

78. Pycnoptilus floccosus, *Gould*, Downy Pycnoptilus, "Pilot-bird."

Pycnoptilus floccosus, Gould, Suppl. Bds., Austr., fol ed., pl. 27 (1869); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 128, pl. 9, fig. 6 (1889).

This species is an inhabitant of the thick undergrowth of the humid gullies and ranges of the Illawarra district, and the scrubs that clothe the sides of the Blue Mountains. It passes most of its time upon the ground hopping about the tangled masses of luxuriant vegetation or among the fallen and decaying timber in search of insects and seeds of various kinds, which constitute its food, stopping ever and anon to pour forth its rich and clear notes which can be heard a considerable distance away. Although never

frequenting cultivated lands or orchards it is by no means a shy species, and will often venture on to the side of a mountain track in search of food if one is only a few feet away, and remains perfectly still. The nest is a dome-shaped structure with an entrance in the side, and is composed of strips of bark and rootlets, lined inside with feathers; it is usually built in the thick undergrowth near the ground. Eggs, two in number for a sitting, of a slaty or purplish-brown ground colour, with a zone of indistinct blackish markings on the thicker end; length, 1 x 0·75 inch.

79. Cisticola exilis, *Vigors* and *Horsfield.* Grass Warbler, "Corn-bird," "Barley-bird."

Cysticola exilis, Gould, Bds. Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 42 (1848).
Cysticola lineocapilla, Gould, Bds. Austr , fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 43 (1848).
Cysticola isura, Gould, Bds. Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 44 (1848).
Cysticola ruficeps, Gould, Bds. Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 45 (1848).

The above synonymy has been worked out by Dr. R. B. Sharpe in the seventh volume of the catalogue of birds in the British Museum, p. 269, after a careful examination of a large series of specimens, and who has conclusively proved that the four plates figured in Gould's work, and referred to above, are only sexual and seasonal variations of the present species, *C. exilis*; and specimens shot in the neighbourhood of Sydney sustain Dr. Sharpe's determination. This little bird has a most extensive range, being found in favourable situations all over Australia, the Papuan and Moluccan Islands, the Phillipines and South-eastern Asia. In New South Wales it is more frequently met with in the grass beds near the coast; and in cultivated parts of the Colony, the standing grain crops. The nest is usually built near the ground upon three or four grass stalks growing through some broad-leaved plant; when built in crops, frequently a thistle. It is a neat dome-shaped structure, formed of thistledown, fine grasses, and the dead flowering portions of grass stems beautifully woven together, and usually almost concealed by two or three of the surrounding leaves being worked on to the sides of the nest. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, blue, spotted or blotched, particularly at the larger end, with brownish-red. The food of this bird consists exclusively of minute insects. From its habits of building in standing crops in agricultural districts it is known in some parts of the Colony under the local name of "Corn" or "Barley-bird."

80. Sericornis citreogularis, *Gould.* Yellow-throated Sericornis.

Sericornis citreogularis, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., pl. 46 (1868) North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 129, pl. 9, fig. 5 (1889).

This species is freely dispersed throughout the rich coastal brushes of the Colony. It is common in the luxuriant undergrowth that clothes the sides of the Richmond and Clarence Rivers, and the humid gullies of the Illawarra District. The nest of this species is a large, pendent, dome-shaped structure, composed of rootlets and mosses, with a narrow entrance in the side, and is usually attached to the end of a drooping branch. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, of a pale chocolate-brown or uniform drab ground colour, minutely freckled at the larger end with blackish-brown, forming a well-defined zone; length, 0·95 x 0·68 inch. The food of this genus of birds, which consists of insects of various kinds, is chiefly obtained on the ground, among the fallen timber or débris in the low undergrowth, but they seldom venture on to cleared or cultivated lands.

81. Sericornis magnirostris, *Gould.* Large-billed Sericornis.

Sericornis magnirostris, Gould, Birds Austr., fol. ed , Vol. III, pl. 52 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 132 (1889).

A smaller species, frequenting the same situations as the Yellow-throated Sericornis, and which it resembles in habits and mode of nidification. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, of a faint purplish-white ground colour, indistinctly spotted with dark-brown, the markings usually being confined to the larger end of the egg, and forming a confluent patch or well-defined zone; length, 0·77 x 0·58 inch. The Large-billed Sericornis is frequently the foster-parent of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*).

82. Sericornis frontalis, *Vigors* and *Horsfield.* White-fronted Sericornis.

Sericornis frontalis, Gould, Birds Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 49 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 131, pl. 9, fig. 16 (1889).

This is the most common species of the genus in New South Wales, inhabiting not only the coastal brushes, like *S. citreogularis* and *S. magnirostris*, but also the scrubby undergrowth of the mountain ranges inland. The nest is a dome-shaped structure, with a narrow entrance in the side; it is outwardly composed of leaves, dried portions of fern fronds, and wiry rootlets, and lined inside with feathers or hair. Usually it is well-concealed at the bottom of a scrubby bush, or under the shelter of a tuft of grass. Sometimes it is placed in the dead, leafy top of a fallen sapling, or in a clump of low ferns. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, of a faint purplish-brown ground colour, with a well-defined zone of dark purplish-brown markings on the larger end; length, 0·78 x 0·6 inch. This species commences to breed in August, and continues the four following months.

83. Sericornis maculatus, *Gould.* Spotted Sericornis.

Sericornis maculatus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 51 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 133.

The scrubs of the south-western portion of the Colony are the only places in New South Wales this species is met with. In habits and mode of nidification it resembles the preceding species. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, of a fleshy-white ground colour, freckled and spotted with dark purplish and slaty-grey markings, which predominate as usual towards the larger end; length, 0·78 x 0·54 inch.

84. Pyrrholæmus brunnea, *Gould.* Red-Throat.

Pyrrholæmus brunneus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 68 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds , p. 145, pl. IX, fig. 15, (1889).

The Red-Throat inhabits the arid scrubs of the central and south-western portions of the Colony, but where it is by no means numerous. The nest, which is usually placed in a low bush near the ground, is spherical in form, with a small hole in the side, and is composed of soft dried grasses, lined inside with feathers or fur. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, of a uniform olivaceous-brown, chocolate-brown, or bronze tint, some specimens having an indistinct zone or cap on the larger end. The food of the Red-Throat consists exclusively of insects.

PL. XII.

ACANTHIZA NANA, Vig. & Horsf.
Yellow Acanthiza.

GEOBASILEUS CHRYSORRHOA, Quoy et Gaim.
Yellow-rumped Geobasileus.

85. ACANTHIZA PUSILLA, *Latham.* Little Brown Acanthiza, "Tomtit."

Acanthiza pusilla, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 53 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 133 (1889).

The species belonging to the closely allied genera, *Acanthiza* and *Geobasileus*, found in New South Wales, are well known to most residents of the Colony under the local names of "Tomtits" and "Dickies," which are bestowed on all members of these genera. Being strictly insectivorous, and frequenting orchards and gardens in search of food, they are most useful little birds. The present species, *A. pusilla*, is more often met with in the scrubby undergrowth near the coast than inland. It commences to breed in July, constructing a dome-shaped nest of strips of bark and grasses, lined inside with the white down from the seed-pods of the introduced "Cotton Plant" (*Gomphocarpus fruticosus*) and feathers. The nest is usually built near the ground, and frequently in the low fern (*Pteris aquilina*). Eggs, three in number for a sitting, pure white, finely freckled with dull reddish-brown on the thicker end, where in some instances the markings assume the form of a zone; length, 0·66 x 0·49 inch.

86. ACANTHIZA LINEATA, *Gould.* Lineated Acanthiza, "Striped-headed Tomtit."

Acanthiza lineata, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 61 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 138 (1889).

The Lineated Acanthiza is frequently met with in the same localities as the preceding species, but it is more freely dispersed throughout the low gum saplings that clothe the sides of our mountain ranges than the scrubby undergrowth near the coast. The nest of this species, which is usually built among the leafy twigs of a gum sapling, is a neat dome-shaped structure, with a protecting hood sheltering the narrow entrance near the top; it is composed of bark fibre closely interwoven, and ornamented on the outside with spiders' nests or the white paper-like bark of the *Melaleuca*, and warmly lined with feathers or opossum-fur. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, elongate in form, of a pinky-white ground colour, distinctly zoned on the larger end with brownish-red markings; length, 0·7 x 0·5 inch. From its habit of building a pendent nest, this bird is known locally by bird-nesting boys in the neighbourhood of Sydney as the "Hanging Dicky."

87. ACANTHIZA NANA, *Vigors and Horsfield.* Little Yellow Acanthiza, "Yellow Tomtit."

Acanthiza nana, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 60 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 137, pl. XIII, fig. 16 (1889).

This species is freely dispersed throughout the eastern portions of the Colony. Near the coast it may be constantly met with in the light undergrowth, or among the *Casuarinæ* and *Eucalypti*, diligently searching for minute insects which constitute its food. The nest is built in the topmost twigs of a low tree, usually a *Melaleuca* or gum sapling, and not unfrequently at the extremity of a bushy bough of the acclimatised *Pinus insignus;* it is a dome-shaped structure with a narrow entrance near the top, and is composed of bark fibre and grasses, ornamented on the outside

with spiders' bags or fine green mosses, and warmly lined with finer grasses, feathers, or the silky down from the seed-pods of the "Cotton Plant." Eggs, three in number for a sitting, white, with longitudinal blotches and freckles of dull reddish or chocolate-brown uniformly dispersed over the surface of the shell; length, 0·65 x 0·45 inch. All the species of *Acanthizæ* inhab iting New South Wales are frequently the foster-parents of the Fan tailed and Bronze Cuckoos. The specimen from which the figure is taken is a male, but the sexes are alike in plumage. This species is also known locally in the neighbourhood of Sydney as the "Little Hanger" or "Little-Hanging Dicky."

88. ACANTHIZA UROPYGIALIS, *Gould.* Chestnut-rumped Acanthiza.

Acanthiza uropyqialis, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 56 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 135 (1889).

This species inhabits the scrubby portions of the central and western districts of the Colony. Its nest, which is built in the hollow limb or trunk of some small tree, or firmly wedged between the upright stems of two trees growing close to each other, is dome-shaped, and composed of soft dried grasses and bark-fibre neatly lined with feathers and fur. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, of a delicate fleshy-white, minutely freckled all over with light reddish-brown markings; length, 0·65 x 0·48 inch.

89. GEOBASILEUS CHRYSORRHOA, *Quoy et Gaimard.* Yellow-rumped Geobasileus, "Yellow-tail," "Tomtit," "Double Dick."

Acanthiza chrysorrhœa, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 63 (1848).

Geobasileus chrysorrhœa, North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 141 (1889).

A common and well-known species found all over New South Wales. It frequents gardens and orchards, and is exceedingly useful in ridding the trees of many insect pests. The normal breeding season of this bird commences in July and continues until the end of December, but nests are sometimes found containing eggs or young ones during February and March. The nest is usually built in the bushy end of a drooping bough or in a thick shrub, and in gardens, frequently in orange-trees, prickly hedges, and the acclimatised pines, *Araucaria excelsa* and *Pinus insignus.* It is a roughly-formed dome-shaped structure, with a narrow entrance in the side, and is composed of dried grasses, strips of bark, wool, cobwebs, the flowering portions of grasses all matted up together, and lined inside with finer grasses and feathers. On the top of the nest is a small cup-shaped depression without any lining, which is used by the male bird as a roosting-place. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, pure white, but occasionally they are found with minute dots and spots of reddish and yellowish brown sparingly distributed over the surface of the shell; length, 0·68 x 0·5 inch. This species more often than any other bird is the foster-parent of the Bronze Cuckoo, (*Lamprococcyx plagosus.*) The open cup-shaped depression or second nest on the top of the lower structure is not so symmetrically formed as figured in Gould's work. From this bird's habit of building an open nest on the top of the domed one, it is known locally in the neighbourhood of Sydney as the "Double Dick."

EPHTHIANURA AURIFRONS, GOULD.
ORANGE-FRONTED EPHTHIANURA.

EPHTHIANURA ALBIFRONS, JARD. & SELBY.
WHITE-FRONTED EPHTHIANURA.

90. Geobasileus reguloides, *Vigors and Horsfield.* Buff-rumped Geobasileus.

Acanthiza reguloides, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 62 (1848).

Geobasileus reguloides, North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 140 (1889).

The Buff-rumped Geobasileus is often found in the same localities as the preceding species, and is distributed over most parts of the Colony. It is usually met with in autumn and winter in small flocks of from seven to ten in number, busily engaged in searching for insects in the grassy glades of the lightly-timbered undergrowth near the coast, or open forest country inland. The nest of this species, which is usually built in the forked trunk of a tree, and hidden by strips of bark, or under an overhanging bank, is a dome-shaped structure, composed of strips of bark and grasses, lined inside with feathers, opossum-fur, or the silky down from the seed-pods of the "Cotton Plant." Frequently, too, the nest is placed in the mortise-hole of a post, or at the bottom of a low shrub. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, of a delicate white ground colour, freckled and spotted on the thicker end with different shades of reddish and purplish brown, which in most instances become confluent and assume the form of a zone; length, 0·67 x 0·47 inch. This species is not uncommon in the orchards near Eastwood, and where I saw several feeding a young Fan-tailed Cuckooo on the 1st of January.

91. Ephthianura albifrons, *Jardine and Selby.* White-fronted Ephthianura.

Ephthianura albifrons, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 64 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 144, pl. XIII, fig. 11 (1889).

A resident species, frequently met with during spring and summer in marshy localities, or among low ferns on the sand-covered wastes near the coast, and on the open plains and partially-cleared country inland. The nest of this bird is usually built in a tuft of rushes, or in a low bush near the ground; it is an open, cup-shaped structure, outwardly composed of very fine twigs or coarse grasses, and neatly lined inside with finer grasses and hair. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, pure white, sparingly spotted and dotted or irregularly marked with rich reddish-brown; length, 0·67 x 0·48 inch. The food of this species, like the other members of the genus *Ephthianura*, consists principally of caterpillars and soft-bodied insects. The figure represents a male. August and the two following months constitute the usual breeding season, but nests containing fresh eggs have been found during March and April near Sydney.

92. Ephthianura aurifrons, *Gould.* Orange-fronted Ephthianura.

Ephthianura aurifrons, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 65 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 144 (1889).

A plain-frequenting species, inhabiting the central and western districts of the Colony. It is usually met with in small flocks of from ten to twe nty individuals, the brilliant orange-coloured plumage of the male frequently attracting one's attention when travelling over those wide expanses in which the "Cotton Bush" (*Kochia aphylla*) and "Salt Bush" (*Rhagodia parabolica*) abound. The nest of the Yellow-fronted Ephthianura is usually

built in a low bush near the ground, and although slightly smaller, in other respects closely resembles that of the preceding species. Eggs, three in number, white, spotted and dotted with rich red; length, 0·63 x 0·49 inch. The figure represents a male.

93. Ephthianura tricolor, *Gould.* Crimson-fronted Ephthianura.

Ephthianura tricolor, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 66 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs of Austr. Bds., p. 143, pl. XIII, fig. 12 (1889).

A migratory species arriving in the inland portions of the Colony in October, and departing again at the end of January. It frequents scrub or timbered lands, on the outskirts of which it builds its nest in some low bush or tuft of grass near the ground. Eggs white, spotted and dotted with dark red; length, 0·63 x 0·51 inch. The plumage of the adult male is even more conspicuous than that of the Orange-fronted Ephthianura.

94. Origma rubricata, *Latham.* Rock Warbler, "Cave-bird."

Origma rubricata, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 69 (1848); North, Nest and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 142, pl. XIII, fig. 8 (1889).

Although sparingly distributed over Eastern New South Wales, the Rock Warbler is more often met with in that portion of the colony lying between the Manning and Shoalhaven Rivers, frequenting the rocky sides of rivers and gullies near the coast, and the ravines of the mountain ranges inland. It is strictly insectivorous, and obtains its food upon the ground among rocks or débris, but is too shy to enter the gardens of settlers. The nest of this species is oval in form with an entrance in the side, and is composed of fibrous roots lined inside with feathers; it is usually suspended to the roof of a small cave or overhanging rock; but not unfrequently it is built in a disused coal-pit. Eggs, pure white, and three in number for a setting; length, 0·8 x 0·6 inch.

The members of the following genera, *Xerophila*, *Chthonicola*, *Anthus*, *Cincloramphus*, and *Mirafra* I have included in this list, although they are not exclusively insectivorous, their food consisting to a certain extent also of the seeds of various grasses, but they do no harm, and all are exceedingly useful birds to the agriculturist.

95. Xerophila leucopsis, *Gould.* White-faced Xerophila, "Squeaker."

Xerophila leucopsis, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 67 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 150, pl. IX, fig. 14 (1889).

This species is freely dispersed throughout the inland districts of the Colony. It is usually met with both on the plains and in timbered country in small flocks numbering from eight to twenty individuals, and almost always on the ground, searching for the seeds of various grasses or insects, which constitute its food. The nest, which is a rather large domed structure, composed of strips of bark and grasses, lined inside with feathers or hair, is usually placed in the hollow limb or trunk of a small tree, and occasionally at the bottom of a thick shrub; at other times it is placed in the mortise-hole of a post or in the interstices beneath the nest of the Wedge-tailed Eagle. The eggs are four or five in number for a sitting, of a dull white,

thickly freckled and spotted with different shades of reddish and chocolate brown, some specimens having underlying spots of deep bluish-grey, in others the markings being confined to the larger end, and forming a well-defined zone; length, 0·72 x 0·55 inch.

96. Chthonicola sagittata, *Latham.* "Speckled Ground Lark."

Chthonicola minima, Gould, Birds Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 72 (1848).

Chthonicola sagittata, North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 149 (1889).

This is a resident species, and with the exception of the western portions of the Colony, is found in most parts of New South Wales. It passes most of its time on the ground, and is usually met with in open forest country, especially where the *Casurinæ* abound, or in the grassy glades of the lightly-timbered undergrowth near the coast. The nest of this species is a domed-shaped structure, built underneath or at the side of a tuft of overhanging grass, and is constructed throughout of dried grasses, and lined with fur or a few feathers at the bottom. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, of a uniform bright chocolate red, and easily distinguished by the depth and intensity of their colouring from those of any other Australian bird; length, 0·76 x 0·6 inch. The Speckled Ground Lark commences to breed in August, and continues the four following months. Frequently this species is the foster-parent of the Fan-tailed Cuckoo (*Cacomantis flabelliformis*).

97. Anthus australis, *Vigors and Horsfield.* Australian Pipit, "Common Ground Lark."

Anthus australis, Gould, Birds Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 73 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 158 (1889).

A well-known and useful species, found all over Australia. It is common on grassy plains, partially-cleared lands, and cultivation paddocks. The nest of this bird is formed in a hollow scraped in the ground, usually under some overhanging tuft of grass or among low rushes. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, of a dull, white ground colour, which is almost obscured with freckles of slaty-brown, umber-brown, and ashy-grey; length, 0·86 x 0·65 inch. The food of this species consists of insects and small seeds, principally the former. The sexes are alike in plumage.

98. Cincloramphus cruralis, *Vigors and Horsfield.* "Brown Skylark."

Cincloramphus cruralis, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 74 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 152 (1889).

A migratory species, arriving in New South Wales about August, and departing again at the end of February. Its appearance, however, is greatly influenced by the state of the seasons, for in periods of drought it is seldom seen, while after an abundant rainfall, and when the paddocks are clothed with luxuriant grasses and herbage, it is often met with. It breeds in September and October, constructing a nest of dried grasses in a slight hollow in the ground, and usually sheltered by a tuft of long grass. The eggs are four in number for a sitting, of a dull white ground colour, which is almost obscured by very fine isabelline or salmon-coloured freckles and spots; in some instances zones of indistinct markings appear on the thicker end; length, 0·95 x 0·7 inch. This bird is possessed of powers of ventriloquism in addition to its loud and pleasing song. It is more frequently met with in the inland districts of the Colony than near the coast.

99. Cincloramphus rufescens, *Vigors and Horsfield.* "Rufous-rumped Skylark," "Singing Lark."

Cincloramphus rufescens, Gould, Birds Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 76 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 153 (1889).

The Rufous-rumped Skylark is a smaller species than the preceding one, but precisely similar in habits, and in the times of its arrival and departure from New South Wales. The nest is cup-shaped, and is composed of dried grasses lined with hair; it is usually built in a hollow scraped in the earth at the side of a tuft of grass, or hidden by the dead leafy twigs of a fallen tree. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, and subject to considerable variation, the most usual variety found being of a purplish white ground colour, thickly freckled and spotted with reddish-chestnut, chestnut, and purplish-brown markings; length, 0·84 x 0·62 inch.

100. Mirafra horsfieldii, *Gould.* Horsfield's Bush Lark, "Thick-billed Lark."

Mirafra horsfieldi, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 77 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Bds., p. 159 (1889).

The present species frequents open grassy flats, low heath grounds, and cultivation paddocks. When disturbed it only flies a few yards with a peculiar jerky flight, and then suddenly drops into concealment again. It is one of our most pleasing songsters, and may be often heard singing at night while flying slowly about high in the air, and more especially on bright moonlight nights about midsummer.

The Thick-billed Lark breeds during January and February, constructing a partially-domed nest of dried grasses in a slight hollow in the ground, sheltered by a tuft of grass, or by the surrounding crop when built in cultivation paddocks. Eggs, three in number for a sitting, closely resembling small specimens of those of *Anthus australis;* length, 0·78 x 0·5 inch. The sexes are alike in plumage.

101. Megalurus galactotes, *Temminck.* Tawny Grass-bird.

Sphenœacus galactotes, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 35 (1848).

Megalurus galactotes, North, Proc. Linn. Soc., N.S.W., Vol. x, 2nd Series, p. 217 (1895).

A rare species, seldom met with except in the north-eastern portions of the Colony.

102. Megalurus gramineus, *Gould.* Little Grass-bird.

Sphenœacus gramineus, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 36 (1848).

Megalurus gramineus, North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Birds, p. 146 (1889).

The Little Grass-bird is dispersed in favourable situations over most parts of New South Wales. It frequents dense grass-beds growing in swampy localities, the rush or reed lined margins of watercourses, and, near the coast, the mangrove-fringed estuaries or sides of rivers. The nest of this species, which is a deep cup-shaped structure, is composed of dried aquatic plants, coarse grasses, or fibrous roots lined inside with feathers, the entrance at the top being slightly narrowed or domed, and is usually placed at the bottom of a tuft of rushes, or on the forked, upright, leafy stems of a mangrove. Eggs, four in number for a sitting, of a reddish-white ground

MIRAFRA HORSFIELDI, GOULD.
HORSFIELD'S BUSH LARK.

ANTHUS AUSTRALIS, VIG. & HORSF.
AUSTRALIAN PIPIT.

colour, finely freckled all over with purplish-red or reddish-brown markings; length, 0·76 x 0·53 inch. This species is extremely shy, and it is seldom possible to get a glimpse of it, except when it flies over a clear expanse of water from one clump of rushes to another. In summer its plaintive note may be heard during the night.

103. Acrocephalus australis, *Gould.* "Reed Warbler."

Acrocephalus australis, Gould, Birds of Austr., fol. ed., Vol. III, pl. 37 (1848); North, Nests and Eggs Austr. Birds, p. 169.

A migratory species, arriving in New South Wales about the end of September, and departing again in March. It frequents the reedy margins of rivers and lagoons, and is freely dispersed over most parts of the Colony. The nest of the Reed Warbler is usually built between two or three upright reeds growing in the water. It is a deep cup-shaped structure, outwardly composed of the soft, paper-like sheaths of reeds and decaying water-weeds, and lined inside with grasses, sometimes a few feathers being worked into the bottom of the nest. Eggs, three or four in number for a sitting, of a greyish-white ground colour, spotted and blotched all over with different shades of yellowish-brown, blackish-brown, and underlying markings of deep violet-grey; length, 0·8 x 0·55 inch. The breeding season commences in October, and lasts until the end of January. Not unfrequently this bird resorts to gardens, especially those containing a reed-fringed creek or water-hole. Like the preceding species, the cheerful notes of the Reed Warbler may be frequently heard during the night.

(*To be continued.*)

[Four plates.]

Sydney: William Applegate Gullick, Government Printer.—1897.